Part III. goes into detailed account of specific diseases of plants in which the hosts are also taken up alphabetically. Only those diseases which are of economic importance are considered. The doubtful ones, or those of little economic importance, are omitted. Here plant pathologists will find ground to differ with the author in his choice of those specific diseases which he considers most important. The survey in the chapter of non-parasitic, or physiologic, diseases will be appreciated by the student.

Part IV. takes up a detailed account of laboratory and teaching methods. Here the author incorporates much of his own methods and technique. This part will be found of particular interest to the teacher of both undergraduate and graduate students. Part IV. is made up of forty-six lessons in which every phase of laboratory technique is elaborately and clearly set forth. Finally the book concludes with an appendix which considers the preparation of fungicides and insecticides, spray calendar, keys for determining species of *Mucor, Aspergillus, Penicillium,* Erysiphaceæ and the fleshy fungi.

The distinctiveness of the book is the extensive field which it covers in mycology and plant pathology. It stands by itself, in its difference from the average American text-book bearing on these subjects. The book fills a timely want, and it should find a place in every library of the teacher, investigator or student.

J. J. TAUBENHAUS
TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS[1]

THE four hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the Royal College of Physicians of London is an event which can not be allowed to pass without comment. On September 23, 1518, Henry VIII. granted the charter by which the college was constituted. He did so, moved by the example of similar institutions in Italy and elsewhere, and by the instigation of Thomas Linacre and others of his own physicians, and of Wolsey his chancellor, with a view to the improvement and more orderly exercise of the art of physic, and the repression of irregular, unlearned and incompetent practitioners of that faculty. The college consisted of eight persons known as "elects," with power to elect from amongst themselves a President annually, and to choose the "most cunning and expert men" to fill vacancies as occurred in their number. At the same time it was enacted that no person except a graduate of Oxford or Cambridge, without dispensation, should be permitted to practise physics throughout England, unless he had previously been examined and approved by the president and three of the elects. The first meetings of the college were held at Linacre's private house in Knightrider Street, the front portions of which, comprising a parlor below and a chamber above, used as a council room and library, were given to the college during Linacre's lifetime. These small premises—the ground on which they stood only measuring about twenty-four square feet—continued to be used for nearly a hundred years. But in 1581 they were enlarged, and a capacious theater added, in which to deliver the lectures founded by Dr. Caldwell and Lord Lumley, in 1583. Dr. Foster was the first Lumleian lecturer. A botanical garden, under the supervision of Gerard, was also secured. Linacre, founder of the college, learned both as physician and scholar, was president until he died in 1524. Of distinguished successors and benefactors of the college during its first hundred years of existence the names of Clement (1544), professor of Greek at Oxford; of Wotton, the zoologist; of Caius (1555), linguist, critic, physician, naturalist, second founder of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, antiquarian and designer of the insignia of office still used by presidents; of William Gilbert (1600), author of "De Magnete" and first physicist of the college, naturally occur to us. The last meeting in the old college in Knightrider Street was on June 25, 1614; the first meeting in the new college, in Amen Corner, Paternoster Row, was on August 23, 1614. Here, in April, 1616, Harvey

[1] From the *British Medical Journal.*

delivered the Lumleian lectures in which he is supposed to have expounded his doctrine of the circulation of the blood; two years later the first Pharmacopæia Londinensis was issued by the college. The civil wars reduced the college to the greatest distress. Unable to pay an assessment by Parliament of five pounds per week, and its rent to St. Paul's, it was in danger of being sold by auction, when Dr. Baldwin Hamley came to the rescue, purchased house and garden himself, and with the utmost generosity presented them to his colleagues two years afterwards. Prosperity followed, for in 1653–4 the munificence of Harvey enriched the college with a museum, a "noble building of Roman architecture," stocked with valuable and curious contents, and a library of medical books, treatises on geometry, geography, astronomy, music, optics, natural history and travels. But this prosperity was not long continued. After Harvey's death in 1657, the treasury was nearly empty, lectures were suspended, large numbers of physicians were living and practising without a license within the liberty of the college, examinations were discontinued. The creation in 1664 by Sir Edward Alston of upwards of seventy honorary Fellows, both brought unlicensed practitioners under the authority of the college and replenished its coffers. But in 1665, during the great plague, most of the Fellows and officers of the college fled the city, and thieves broke in and stole the whole of the contents of the treasury chest. On September 5, 1666, the great fire consumed the whole of the college buildings; only the charters, annals, insignia, some instruments and portraits, and 140 printed books in the library were saved. The premises in Amen Corner were never rebuilt, and the college remained homeless until its new buildings in Warwick Lane, designed by Sir Christopher Wren, were opened without ceremony on May 13, 1674. This commodious and stately building occupied four sides of a quadrangle enclosing a large paved court, on the east side of which was erected at Sir John Cutler's expense a spacious anatomical theater. The other sides of the quadrangle contained the library, cœnaculum, censors' room and other public apartments. At the back of the college were the botanical garden, and in 1684 a noble library building was presented by the Marquess of Dorchester. Here the college stood for 150 years; all that remains of it now is the beautiful Spanish oak wainscoting, the gift of Hamley, which lines the Censors' Room in Pall Mall, and two colossal statues of Cutler and Charles II, which may be seen in the Guildhall Museum. At the end of 150 years the college buildings had become dilapidated, Warwick Lane was a slum, the population and fashion had moved westwards, and a more convenient situation for the Royal College of Physicians was a necessity. Mainly through the influence of Sir Henry Halford, a grant of land was obtained from the Crown at a cost of £6,000 in Pall Mall East, and on it the present college building, designed by Sir Robert Smirke, was erected and opened with great ceremony on June 25, 1825. The premises in Warwick Lane were sold for £9,000. One may regret their disappearance, and that it is no longer possible to people them with the shades of those who have made the history of medicine and of this famous college during 150 years of its life. The names of such are Mayerne, Glisson and Sydenham, exponents of clinical medicine, followed by Radcliffe, Garth, Arbuthnot, Freind, Sloane and Meade, and last but not least, William Heberden. All of these have made their mark in the history of medicine, and directly or indirectly have been associated with the history of the college. The quartercentenary of the Royal College of Physicians of London reminds us that, in spite of modern progress, we can not afford to neglect the learning of past ages.

SPECIAL ARTICLES

SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE CAUSES OF BIOELECTRIC PHENOMENA

Bioelectric phenomena constitute a group of facts for which adequate and satisfactory explanations have hitherto been lacking. It is my purpose in this paper to point out certain